

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.     **(Currently Amended)**     A machine (5) for making and packaging articles (1) containing an infusion product, the machine (5) being ~~of the type~~ defined by a production line (A) and comprising:

5                     a plurality of operating stations ~~located one after the other~~ arranged in a series relative to each other and designed to make at least one continuous strip (S) by superposing and sealing two webs of filter paper with measured quantities or charges (4) of infusion product interposed  
10                    between them the two webs at regular intervals; and

                   at least one cutting station (6) for dividing up the strip (S) to form a succession of individual articles (1); ~~the machine (5) being characterised in that it further comprises~~ and

                   at least one built-in packaging station (8, 8a) for packaging groups  
15                   of the articles (1) in ~~bag-like~~ packets (10) ~~[[;]]~~ .

wherein the built-in packaging station (8, 8a) ~~being~~ is located immediately downstream of the cutting station (6) and ~~comprising~~ includes a packaging device (9) for ~~making-up~~ forming stacks (1a, 1b) of ~~with the~~ articles (1) and a transfer device (11) which guides the stacks (1a, 1b) of  
20                   articles (1) along a vertical feed path section (Z) ~~transversal~~ in a direction that is transverse relative to the production line (A) and feeds them the stacks (1a, 1b) of articles into the ~~bag-like~~ packets (10).

2.       **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that the~~ wherein each packet (10) is formed on the transfer device (11) and positioned with its an inlet opening (10a) at the a lower end (11a) of the transfer device (11) ~~itself~~.

5           3.       **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to claim 1 ~~or 2, characterised in that~~ wherein the packaging device (9) ~~comprises~~ includes a ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) that moves to and from the guided transfer device (11)~~[[;]]~~, and wherein the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) ~~being~~ is equipped with at least one seat (14, 15) for receiving at least one of the  
10       stacks (1a, 1b) of articles (1).

          4.       **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) has an open bottom (13a) bounded by a circular ledge (16, 17) on which an article (1) forming the a bottom of the a corresponding stack (1a 1b) is placed ~~can be~~  
15       rested.

          5.       **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) ~~has two~~ includes a pair of adjacent seats (14, 15) for receiving two stacks (1a, 1b) of the articles (1)~~[[;]]~~ , and wherein each ~~of the seats~~ seat (14, 15) has  
20       having an open bottom (13a, 13b) bounded by a circular ledge (16, 17) on which the an article (1) forming the a bottom of the ~~respective~~ a corresponding stack (1a 1b) is placed ~~can be~~ rested.

6. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim 5, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the pair of adjacent ~~two~~ seats (14, 15) in the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) form, in cross section, a binocular-shaped profile that is open in the a middle region where the ~~two~~ pair of adjacent seats (14, 15) meet and ~~extending for the full~~ extend along an entire height of the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13).

7. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~any of the foregoing claims from~~ claim 3 to 6, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein a head end (13c) of the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) has a ~~through~~ vertical opening (18) ~~extending for the full~~ along an entire height of the bucket (13) itself.

8. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~any of the foregoing claims from~~ claim 3 to 6, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein each of the at least one seat seats (14, 15) in the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket has a respective slot (14a, 15a) defined at the top of it an upper region thereof to partially accommodate a part at least a portion of means (27) for stabilising and stacking the articles (1).

9. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~any of the foregoing claims from~~ claim 1 to 8, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the packaging device (9) ~~comprises~~ includes a ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13) equipped with actuating means (19) for moving ~~it~~ the packaging device (9) in both directions along a path (T) ~~transversal~~ transverse relative to the ~~article (1) vertical downfeed~~ feed path section (Z) and to an article (1)

stacking axis (Z1), ~~thereby imparting~~ and which imparts a reciprocating motion to the ~~carriage-like~~ bucket (13).

10.     **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to claim 9, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the actuating means (19) ~~consist of~~  
5     includes a rigid rod (49) that is attached to a rear end of the carriage-like bucket (13) and is slidably driven along the ~~transversal~~ path (T).

11.     **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to claim 9  
or 10, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the actuating means (19) ~~position~~  
positions at least one seat of ~~the~~ a pair of adjacent seats (14, 15) under  
10     the packaging station (8), and wherein the bucket (13) is provided with the  
pair of adjacent seats (14, 15).

12.     **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to ~~any of~~  
~~the foregoing claims from claim 1 to 11,~~ ~~characterised in that it comprises~~  
comprising two adjacent packaging stations (8, 8a) for simultaneously  
15     packaging the articles (1).

13.     **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to ~~any of~~  
~~the foregoing claims from claim 1 to 12,~~ ~~characterised in that it further~~  
~~comprises~~ comprising a fixed, rigid table (20) located at the a stacking  
area below ~~the~~ a base of the packaging device (9) and forming a  
20     temporary base~~[[;]]~~ , wherein the table (20) ~~having at its~~ has a free end  
with a through opening (21) ~~to match the shape, and allow the~~ formed  
therein to permit passage of~~[[;]]~~ a base plate (26) therethrough.

14. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~any of the foregoing claims from claim 1 to 13, characterised in that~~ wherein the packaging station (8, 8a) comprises:

5 a pair of vertically sliding, pre-stacking levers (22) acting at a vertical stacking channel (23) defined by four vertical guides (24); and

a second carriage (25), which moves vertically, interacting with the pair of pre-stacking levers (22), and which has a base plate (26) and an upper retaining fork (27) acting in the stacking channel (23) to receive a ~~the~~ predetermined number of stacked articles (1) from the pair of pre-stacking levers (22) and to ~~complete a stack (1a, 1b) of articles (1) in such~~ a way as to place the stack (1a, 1b) of articles (1) in the packaging device (9).

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15 15. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim 14, ~~characterised in that the~~ wherein each lever of the pair of pre-stacking levers (22) are positioned opposite each other on both sides of the stacking channel (23) and are ~~mobile~~ movable between a working position in which the pre-stacking levers (22) are close together and engage the stacking channel (23) ~~in such a way a way as~~ to support the articles (1) in the stacking channel (23), and an idle position in which the stacking levers (22) are apart ~~in such a way as~~ to enable the articles (1) to move down rapidly~~[[;]]~~ , wherein the pair of pre-stacking levers (22) ~~being~~ are linked to a third, power-driven carriage (28) ~~mobile~~ that is vertically movable ~~in such a way as~~ to enable the pair of pre-stacking levers (22) to move downward

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at a relatively slow rate downwards gradually when they are in the working position and to move up rapidly upward at a relatively fast rate when they are in the idle position.

16. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim  
5 14 ~~or 15, characterised in that~~ wherein the second carriage (25) faces the pair of pre-stacking levers (22) on the opposite side of the stacking channel (23) ~~[[;]]~~ , and wherein the base plate (26) that supports the articles (1) ~~being~~ is located at the a bottom end of the second carriage (25) and ~~being~~ is associated with the a free end of a C-shaped supporting pin  
10 (26a) protruding laterally from the second carriage (25) ~~in such a way as~~ to enable the base plate (26) to be positioned at the a centre of the stacking channel (23) ~~but passing~~ and passing through the a side of the stacking channel (23).

17. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~one of~~  
15 ~~the foregoing claims from claim 14 to 16, characterised in that~~ wherein the retaining fork (27) ~~of the second carriage (25)~~ is positioned at the a front of the stacking channel (23) and ~~can move~~ is movable into the stacking channel (23) itself; , and wherein the ~~retaining~~ the fork (27) ~~being~~ is pivoted ~~to toward~~ the second carriage (25) ~~at (F27)~~ and is movable ~~can~~  
20 ~~move~~ between an idle position in which the retaining fork (27) is positioned at an angle outside the stacking channel (23), and a working position in which the retaining fork (27) is positioned inside the stacking channel (23)

and holds the stack (1a, 1b) of articles (1) in place at least until the articles  
peels (1) are placed in the packaging device (9).

18. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~one of~~  
~~the foregoing claims from claim 15~~ 14 to 17, characterised in that wherein  
5 the second carriage (25) ~~is equipped with~~ includes drive means (29) that  
move in step with the third carriage (28) along a stacking axis (Z1) ~~in such~~  
~~a way as~~ to permit the following steps to be performed:

stacking of a first group ~~or partial quantity~~ of articles (1) on the pair of  
pre-stacking levers (22) as the ~~latter~~ pair of pre-stacking levers are being  
10 ~~moved down~~ moving vertically downward in the working position;

lifting the base plate (26) to position it base plate (26) under the pair  
of pre-stacking levers (22) when the first ~~partial quantity~~ group of articles  
(1) is stacked;

resting the articles (1) on the base plate (26) ~~[[.]]~~ with when the pair of  
15 pre-stacking levers (22) are in the idle position;

then moving the pair of pre-stacking levers (22) upward ~~up again~~;

completing stacking a predetermined quantity of the ~~stack of~~ articles  
(1) ~~in the predetermined quantity~~ on the base plate (26) as the base plate  
(26) ~~latter~~ moves ~~down~~ downward and the retaining fork (27) moves to the  
20 working position on ~~the topmost~~ an uppermost article (1) of the stack (1a,  
1b) of the articles (1); and

placing the stack (1a, 1b) of articles (1) in the packaging device (9).

19. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~any of the foregoing claims from claim 1 to 18, characterised in that~~ wherein the transfer device (11) comprises guide and controlled downfeed means (12) which ~~in turn~~ comprise:

5 a vertical channel (30) formed by a hollow element (31)~~];~~ , wherein the channel (30) ~~having~~ has at least one zone (32, 33) for the passage of the articles (1); and

an element (34) for pushing/accompanying the articles (1), which is positioned above the hollow element (31) and which is vertically mobile  
10 between an idle end position where the element (34) is away from an ~~the~~ opening at ~~the~~ a top of the hollow element (31)~~][,]~~ so as to enable the packaging device (9) to be positioned at said the top opening, and a working end position where the element (34) guides and pushes the articles (1), sliding along ~~the~~ an inside of the channel (30) so as to position  
15 the articles (1) in the bag-like packet (10).

20. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim 19, ~~characterised in that the~~ wherein a cross-sectional profile of the channel (30) defines two adjacent circular zones (32, 33) ~~for the simultaneous guided downfeed of two stacks (1a, 1b) of articles (1).~~

21. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim 20, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the two circular zones (32, 33) ~~for access by the article (1) stacks (1a, 1b)~~ have a diameter (D) that is smaller than ~~the~~ a maximum dimension (D1) of the articles (1) ~~so as to control and~~



guide the articles (1) as ~~they~~ the articles (1) are pushed down along the channel (30).

22. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim  
claims 20 and 24, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the hollow element (31) is  
5 ~~equipped with~~ includes a longitudinal conduit (35) for conveying a fluid  
positioned centrally between the two circular zones (32, 33), and leading  
into at least one bottom opening (36) through which the fluid ~~itself~~ is fed  
into the hollow element (31)[[,]] in such a way as to blow the fluid ~~on~~ onto  
the articles (1) as ~~they~~ the articles (1) move down along the channel (30).

10 23. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim  
22, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the fluid is nitrogen.

24. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim  
claims 19 to 23, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein each zone of the circular  
zones (32, 33) ~~of the hollow element (31)~~ has a plurality of radial grooves  
15 (38) around a ~~its~~ circumference thereof that extend along a ~~extending for~~  
the full length of the circular zones (32, 33).

25. (Currently Amended) The machine according to ~~one of~~  
~~the foregoing claims from~~ claim 19 to 24, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the  
pushing/accompanying element (34) comprises a flat head (34a) designed  
20 to come into contact with the articles (1) so as to push and guide the  
articles (1) down the circular zones (32, 33).

26. (Currently Amended) The machine according to claim  
25, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the flat head (34a) is associated with a

vertical rod (39) that slides along guides (40) associated with a vertical column (41) located above the hollow element (31) ~~[[;]]~~ , wherein the rod (39) ~~being~~ is driven by a variable-speed motor (42) positioned at ~~the~~ a top end of the column (41).

- 5            27.        **(Currently Amended)**     The machine according to ~~one of~~  
~~the foregoing claims from claim 19 to 26, characterised in that at the lower~~  
~~end of the hollow element (31), there is~~ wherein a sealing and cutting unit  
(43) is positioned at a lower end of the hollow element (31) and is  
designed to close the inlet opening (10a) of the ~~bag-like~~ packet (10)  
10        positioned under the hollow element (31) and to simultaneously form the  
base (10b) of ~~the~~ a next packet (10) being formed around the hollow  
element (31).